

## Ritenour AEL Director A "Free Spirit" or Something More?



*John Bowers is the rookie Director of the Ritenour Adult Learning Center in St. Louis, MO. His mother says he and his wife, Monica Jackson are "Free Spirits", which John says is "polite code for someone who lacks direction, career-oriented employment, and possibly a college degree". John however is not so sure that the label necessarily fits.*

*Originally from Kirkwood, and currently residing in Glendale, John's resume reads very much like alphabet soup. He has an MA (Master of Arts) degree in English from St. Louis University, and a BA*

*(Bachelor of Arts) degree in English with a Minor in Secondary Education from Boston College.*

*I think the best person to tell the rest of the story, is John himself, so here it is in his words, or pretty close to it anyway:*

From January 2004 to July 2005, I was the Director of Marketing and Recruitment for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of King and Pierce Counties (Seattle, Washington). There I oversaw efforts to recruit new volunteers and coordinated a variety of marketing and PR initiatives. This included launching a new website, making comments to TV and radio news personalities, and setting a new agency record for volunteer recruitment (that was fun).

From December 1999 to December 2003, I worked for Leonhardt Fitch, a brand strategy and graphic design firm in Seattle. During this time, I provided brand consulting, product and company naming, and copywriting services for many companies, including Microsoft, Visa USA, Nokia, and Boeing, just to name a few.

I guess the reason my mother likes to label my wife Monica and myself as "Free Spirits" is not

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because of all the wonderful jobs and experience I've had, but, because of all the wonderful jobs and experiences I've had.

Prior to Leonhardt Fitch, Monica and I went to Morocco; it was like a whole other world. We went with the Peace Corps, and while there we learned Arabic, sampled goat head, priced camels, and taught English. We shook hands with Hillary Clinton in a tiny village in the sub-Sahara, though to this day, I am certain that the then first-lady never did actually make eye contact with me.

**FREE SPIRIT,**

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# What is Professional Development?

Professional development can be described many ways. It can improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified. It can improve classroom management skills. It includes activities that give teachers and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet the challenging state academic content standards soon to be implemented.

Sessions are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction. The teacher's performance in the classroom should be impacted long term. Professional development should not stop at the 1-day or short-term workshops, in-services or conferences.

Professional development helps to advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research and strategies for improving student academic achievement and should substantially increase the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers. It helps teachers keep up to date on current issues and reaffirms implementation that works in a classroom should be continued.

As a whole, sessions are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student

academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development. Classroom data (via ACES) can also be used to evaluate PD for teachers.

We focus on high quality professional development as an opportunity for teachers to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become highly qualified which in turn will improve achievement for all students.

Send comments to Jamy Preul at [jpreul@mail.ncmissouri.edu](mailto:jpreul@mail.ncmissouri.edu)

## FREE SPIRIT,

(Cont. from page 1)

Before that, I taught and coordinated programs at the University of Alaska-Anchorage Adult Education Center and the Juneau Adult Education Center. Juneau was interesting, I actually got to stand at the window of an alternative high school, and watch a bear stroll into town. In Anchorage, it wasn't unusual to see a moose walking down a busy street, and I believe that at least one moose licked my car (the only thing I can come up with to explain the smears that I found. I think they like the salt that is dropped on the roads.) My time in Alaska was not all work; I spent part of my time in Anchorage working as a carnie for the Alaska State Fair (ok, maybe I am a little bit of a free spirit).

Basically, I am just like every other person; I have a two-year-old son and a dog that can't stand to have her tail following her around. I worry about things like potty training (he's doing pretty good at it though), pre-school waiting lists, and whether or not my car will still be running by the time I get it paid-off (hey, it's ten years old already).

Yes, I have hobbies and they include reading, fiction-writing, and even though it has been several years, I have been known to enjoy making home-made beer.

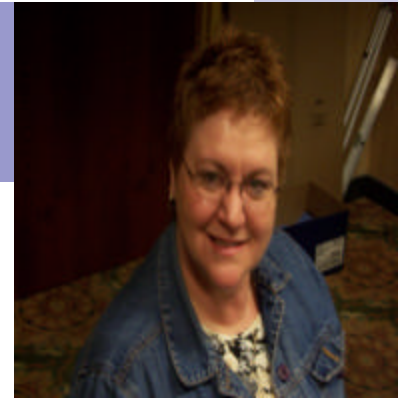
Ok, so, maybe Mom is right. Maybe I am a little bit of a "free spirit"; but how many of you that has been in Adult Education for any length of time, have ever seen a student in your classroom who took the "traditional" path to life or education? I would be willing to venture a guess that there haven't been many, if any.

*It is this writer's opinion that John Bowers may be a free spirit; but, not in the sense that he lacks direction or career-oriented employment, and definitely not that he lacks a college degree. My definition of a "free spirit" is: a person who works at what they enjoy, and enjoy their life and everything it has to offer. It would seem that John Bowers fits that bill, and in my eyes, that makes Ritenour Adult Learning Center a very lucky place.*

# Technology with Jamy

*Submitted by: Jamy Preul*

There are many etiquette guides and many different etiquette rules. Some rules will differ according to the nature of your business and the corporate culture. Below we list what we consider as the 32 most important email etiquette rules that apply to nearly all companies.



## 32 most important email etiquette tips:

1. [Be concise and to the point](#)
2. [Answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions](#)
3. [Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation](#)
4. [Make it personal](#)
5. [Use templates for frequently used responses](#)
6. [Answer swiftly](#)
7. [Do not attach unnecessary files](#)
8. [Use proper structure & layout](#)
9. [Do not overuse the high priority option](#)
10. [Do not write in CAPITALS](#)
11. [Don't leave out the message thread](#)
12. [Add disclaimers to your emails](#)
13. [Read the email before you send it](#)
14. [Do not overuse Reply to All](#)
15. [Mailings > use the bcc: field or do a mail merge](#)
16. [Take care with abbreviations and emoticons](#)
17. [Be careful with formatting](#)
18. [Take care with rich text and HTML messages](#)
19. [Do not forward chain letters](#)
20. [Do not request delivery and read receipts](#)
21. [Do not ask to recall a message.](#)
22. [Do not copy a message or attachment without permission](#)
23. [Do not use email to discuss confidential information](#)
24. [Use a meaningful subject](#)
25. [Use active instead of passive](#)
26. [Avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT](#)
27. [Avoid long sentences](#)
28. [Don't send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks](#)
29. [Don't forward virus hoaxes and chain letters](#)
30. [Keep your language gender neutral](#)
31. [Don't reply to spam](#)
32. [Use cc: field sparingly](#)

*These tips were taken from [www.emailreplies.com](http://www.emailreplies.com). Hold control then click each line and you will be taken to that area of the web-site.*

# State of Adult Literacy 2005

*ProLiteracy Worldwide is a nonprofit international literacy organization based in Syracuse, NY, that was formed by the 2002 merger of Laubach Literacy International and Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. ProLiteracy Worldwide is now the oldest and largest nongovernmental literacy organization in the world and pursues a mission of sponsoring educational programs that help adults and their families acquire the literacy practices and skills they need to function more effectively in their daily lives.*

## The Findings

To determine the American public's understanding of literacy beyond the most traditional concept of an individual's ability to read, ProLiteracy asked survey respondents to define illiteracy. The survey indicated that people's understanding of the complexity of illiteracy becomes broader with the more education they have; i.e., the more education they have, the less likely they are to say that illiteracy is simply "the inability to read or write at all." Thirty-two percent of those individuals responding to the survey define illiteracy as the inability to read and/or write well enough to obtain employment and keep a job. Almost one in four individuals considers illiteracy to be reading and writing at very low skill levels, what many professionals in the adult literacy and adult basic education field refer to as "functional illiteracy." Just over one-third of Americans see illiteracy as the total lack of reading and writing ability.

Americans view low literacy in adults as neither a particularly large nor a particularly small problem for the country. According to the survey, 35 percent of the population considers adult low literacy to be a large problem, while 18 percent perceive it to be a small problem. The majority, represented by 42 percent, rated the problem of adult literacy as a three on a scale of one to five. Residents of western states, individuals over the age of 50, and African Americans are slightly more likely to see low literacy as a greater problem than members of other demographic sub-groups. This suggests that, while most Americans perceive low literacy in adults to be a problem, they do not have a sense of urgency about it despite the fact that an overwhelming 77 percent believe it is very important for the United States to come as close to a 100 percent literacy rate as possible. Just one percent said that a 100 percent literacy rate is not important at all.

While 35 percent of respondents cited poor education as the cause of adult low literacy, one out of every five respondents believes that adults have poor literacy skills because they did not apply themselves as students while in school. Another one in seven associates poor literacy skills with living in poverty and 11 percent attribute it to immigrants who speak and or write in a language other than English. Respondents in the 18 to 29-year age group, the fastest growing demographic entering adult literacy programs, are more likely to lay the blame for low literacy skills at the door of the education system than on the indi-

vidual.

Respondents cite poor quality education and indifferent students as the primary contributors to the problem of low literacy, and see state and federal governments as the top two contributors to solving the problem. Forty-two percent believe either the state or federal government has the responsibility to finance adult education or literacy programs. One in five, however, believes those individuals who use the programs, i.e., the adult learners, should finance the acquisition of their basic reading, writing, comprehension, and math skills individually. Residents in the east, south, and central regions of the country are most inclined to express this opinion, as are individuals with less than a high school education.

While many respondents said that the federal and state governments have the responsibility to fund adult education and literacy programs, Americans also are willing to contribute through both charitable donations and tax dollars. More than half — 55 percent — indicated a willingness to support a tax increase as a means of funding government programs to increase literacy among adults. And more than seven in ten individuals described themselves as likely to donate to a charity that promotes literacy and literacy programs for adults.

One in four respondents believes increased funding to formalized adult basic education programs, such as those sponsored by schools, will aid in the delivery of literacy services. With regard to assisting parents in achieving the literacy skills they need to assist their children in becoming good readers, almost half the respondents — 45 percent — perceive that community-



based organizations are best suited to this purpose. Nearly one quarter believe adults who wish to improve their literacy skills should be awarded direct grants to attend the delivery program of their choice.

## Implications for Literacy Practitioners

Based on this survey, more than three-quarters of all Americans believe it is very important for the U.S. to achieve as close to a 100 percent literacy rate as possible. They believe the financial responsibility for adult education lies with states or the federal government, and they express willingness to support adult literacy with tax dollars and personal donations to charities supporting such programs.

With apparent support from a public that is concerned about the issue of adult literacy and willing to invest in it, it is time for the U. S. to make a commitment to lifelong learning opportunities for its citizens. In anticipation of the release of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, ProLiteracy Worldwide has developed a national advocacy plan that is intended to draw more attention to the issue of adult literacy in the United States and its correlation to other issues of pressing national concern, and to increase the resources that can be brought to bear on the problem.

First, ProLiteracy will work with other adult literacy institutions and agencies to raise

awareness among policy makers and persons of influence about the issue of adult literacy and its implications in the United States. It will advocate for an independent in-depth study of the issue of adult literacy in order to address how adult literacy should be defined, how progress

should be assessed, and how outcomes of adult literacy programs are measured and interpreted. To that end, ProLiteracy will advocate for regularly recurring national data collection and analysis efforts, like the much-anticipated NAAL report, that will provide timely and relevant information about the diverse literacy skills and needs of adults in the country.

ProLiteracy will advocate for an organized, coordinated adult basic education and literacy system that affords any adult who wishes to acquire or improve his or her literacy skills the opportunity to access quality instructional services. This system must be multifaceted and consist of a variety of fully integrated service providers in order to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Last but not least, ProLiteracy will advocate for legislative initiatives that both broaden and deepen the public and private resources available to adult literacy programs. These initiatives are intended to increase the regulatory flexibility of existing funding streams intended to serve the potential population of adult literacy students, and to increase incentives to bring new sources of funding into the system.

As of this writing, ProLiteracy is actively engaged in assessing the damage to its affiliates and other literacy stakeholders as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Short-term assistance will be provided to rebuild the literacy infrastructure of the region. However, we also need to recognize the long-term implications of what we witnessed in the storm's aftermath.

The media coverage of the human suffering in New Orleans exposed a large segment of American society that is affected by multiple social problems including poverty, ill health, and low literacy skills. And while we are first of all sympathetic to the loss of life and livelihood there, the need to address the underlying issues that caused so much irreparable harm to this vulnerable population must become a priority for all Americans. The number of families living below the poverty level, the number of elderly needing health care and assistance accessing benefits, and the number of people incarcerated in the U.S. has grown significantly in recent years.

Every state and every locality will be affected. National, regional, and local literacy programs must find ways to meet the needs of their existing constituencies as well as of those individuals forced by Katrina to relocate to new communities.

It will be ProLiteracy's primary agenda to be an advocate for marginalized populations, especially those with low literacy skills, no matter where they reside.

*This article was reprinted from the ProLiteracy Worldwide website. You may read more on this and other articles at*

<http://www.proliteracy.org/downloads/stateoflitpdf.pdf>

## Upcoming PDC Schedule

PCW	October 14-15, 2006
BTAP	November 18-19, 2006
PCW	December 1-2, 2006
PCW	January 20-21, 2007
PCW	February 10-11, 2007
BTAP	March 24-25, 2007
PCW	May 12-13, 2007

## Send Us Your Success Stories!

Does your program have a success story to share? Show-Me Literacy newsletter editor, Nancy Eads, is looking for program "success stories"-- whether it be about students, instructors, overall program achievement, or other things you would like to share with readers. "AEL programs see successes almost on a daily basis. This is a great opportunity for program directors to spotlight volunteers, teachers as well as student stories.

The deadline for submissions will be the 15th each month and can be emailed to: [neads@rolla.k12.mo.us](mailto:neads@rolla.k12.mo.us)

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**Visit the North Central Missouri College Website:**  
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***"The word is not just a sound  
or a written symbol. The word  
is a force; it is the power you  
have to express and communi-  
cate, to think, and thereby to  
create the events in your life".***

**- Don Miguel Ruiz**

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